

137 E. Braeburn Drive
Smyrna, Delaware 19977
August 19, 2019

The Honorable Judge Robert J. Conrad
Western District of North Carolina
235 Charles R. Jonas Federal building
401 West Trade Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

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CHARLOTTE, NC

AUG 22 2019

RE: Sentencing of Amanda Stone: 8-28-2019

Clerk, US District Court
Western District of NC

Dear Honorable Judge Conrad:

As a professional Social Worker I am especially disheartened by Amanda Stone's unethical, immoral and alleged illegal behavior as she is a fellow member of the social work profession. As with other professions, social workers are guided in practice by ethical guidelines. Of special distress is the fact that Amanda Stone worked at the Department of Social Services in Buncombe County her entire career with people who are often financially and emotionally disadvantaged. This makes her misuse of public funds even more egregious. She was well aware of the low incomes of many of the people whom she was entrusted to serve, and from whom she was taking budgeted funds. In addition, it is deplorable that she, herself, comes from a family of privilege.

I am personally acquainted with Amanda Stone's most influential mentor, also a Master's level Social Worker, who trained Ms. Stone as a Protective Service Worker. That supervisor is unquestionably of the highest moral character, insisted on strictly following the rules laid out by the social work profession, as well as agency's policy. There can be no doubt that Ms. Stone was thoroughly schooled in what was considered appropriate of her as a professional, as well as for her duties as a responsible worker at the Buncombe County Department of Social Services.

I was employed at that agency on several occasions; the last time being when Ms. Stone was the Director. In one situation, I personally observed her animosity towards workers who dared "speak truth to power," giving a poor evaluation to a program Ms. Stone desired to be praised. She was angry because of their honesty about the shortfalls of the program and would later not offer mental health assistance to one of those workers who had dared to express her honest opinion. Because of such behaviors under Ms. Stone's direction during the time I was employed there, an atmosphere of fear permeated the entire agency, no doubt affecting the quality of services.

I do not know why Ms. Stone chose to manipulate situations in order to allegedly obtain financial gain, as opposed to embracing the compassionate characteristics to which our profession ascribes. In reading the transcript of her indictment, I became fully convinced that she not only knew what she was doing by her actions in order to increase her income illegally, but that she also took extra advantage of every opportunity to receive illegal monies such as inflating the false hours she was supposedly at work for the County, as well as requesting reimbursement for her extra baggage for those airplane flights falsely labeled, "business trips." For these reasons, I find her behavior totally intentional and therefore disappointing from a professional social worker. I do not believe that she needs special consideration in her sentencing as she consciously took funds from the public for whom she was in a position to protect, and for whom she knew very well were in the most need. Amanda Stone abused the power that was entrusted to her.

My hope for Ms. Stone is that she has time to reflect on her misdeeds while she is serving her prison term and finds a redemptive way to use her professional skills as she attempts to help others.

Sincerely,

Jacksie A. Chatlas, MSW

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1977 graduate of UNC-CH School of Social Work

Recipient of Annie Kiser Bost Award —"Having demonstrated the greatest potential for Service to the Public Welfare System of NC"

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